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SFA Gardens Newsletter, April 1986

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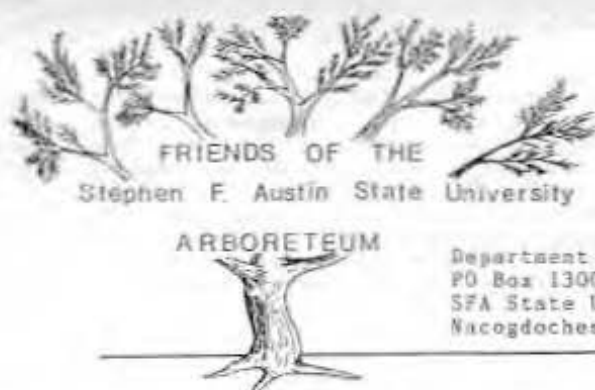
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Friends of the SFA Arboretum Newsletter - Number One -
David Creech - April, 1986

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Welcome to the first issue of a newsletter that should prove interesting to plant lovers in east Texas. Most horticulturists are aware of the arboretum need in our area and should find satisfaction in knowing that an effort is underway at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. We think that the arboretum is an idea whose time has come, that the attributes of an arboretum can only be an asset to the university and the community. There are many precedents at academic institutions across the U.S. where an arboretum and university association has prospered. The Horticulture program is, of course, a natural parent for such a project. The value of a wide range of plant material in the landscape as a teaching tool is obvious and the "curator" concept (students assigned areas to develop and care for) insures at least some part of the annual maintenance costs. The Horticulture program focuses on plant propagation which is such a big part of arboretum development. In spite of the current university economic realities the idea of a university arboretum is going to proceed. The growth of the arboretum depends to a great extent on class management approaches at the teaching level and outside commitment from supporters. We invite you to tour the grounds on May 9, 1986 as a part of a garden field day and to join the Friends association.

In early 1985, a small startup was initiated in Horticulture that involved the landscaping of the grounds immediately surrounding the Agricultural Building. This renovation began in September, 1985 and involved my Landscape Plant Materials class. The students spent 1 month designing landscape plan candidates, argued and lobbied for their favorites and finally settled on a compromise that pleased every one - several ideas were incorporated into the one "garden". This area is referred to as Phase I. The area involves a fenced portion of the grounds just immediately to the south of the Agriculture building. The fence and wisteria laden arbor were built by Mr. Bill Kiewit three or four years

ago as a problem course. He also planted about 100 different woody ornamental shrubs in rows, grouped according to plant size. These original shrubs were a donation from Greenleaf Nursery Company, El Campo, Texas - one of the largest container nurseries in the south. Thank you, Grady Wadsworth! Bill also installed a simple sprinkler system that kept the original shrubs alive during summer droughts. The wisteria laden arbor defines the southwest corner of the garden. Specimen shrubs are now placed in curvilinear slightly raised beds defined by steel edging. The shrubs were transplanted into place after having been dug in the winter and heeled in the shade house. They represent the woody ornamental collection that occupied the site prior to this renovation. Those shrubs were placed in soldierly rows (useful for identification and propagation exercises) that students ridiculed as "ugly". The present goal is to display a wide array of diverse plant material - properly labeled and mapped - and to present it in some sort of tasteful form. The Phase I garden has at its center a formal "box" garden that will be used as a petunia variety floral display until the woody specimens are decided upon, planted and established. Phase II involves that area just to the immediate South of the fence and ground was broken on this area in February, 1986. The central feature of this garden are six raised beds that involve treated lumber retaining walls and substantial sand and bark backfill. We intend to center these beds with specimen Crepe myrtles for a vivid summer display on this slope that faces the busy intramural fields. Crepe myrtles make excellent candidates for a filtered shade area to display sun loving annuals. You are invited to tour the facility anytime on your own and are also urged to attend a garden field day May 9, 1986 1 PM to dark. By then our annual flowers should be worth viewing. Annuals are to be used to fill the spaces not occupied by woody landscape plants. Parking at the facility on a Saturday or Sunday is convenient and directly across the street from the gardens. Please leave only footprints and enjoy the display!

We have received a generous supply of landscape plant materials. Nurseries have applauded the idea of a botanical garden/university campus association. The garden already contains a great wealth of representative plants. The oh so common woodies that grace our southern landscapes are well represented. We have plans to display over 20 varieties of crepe myrtle - Lagerstromia indica - with plant heights varying from less than 2' to monsters that ultimately reach 50' (Busham's Party Pink) if the pruning loppers are kept at a distance! We should have over a dozen Viburnums represented well. The Texas Sage varieties - leucophyllum frutescens - Rain Cloud, Green Cloud, and White Cloud encircle an excellent specimen Yucca, Ilex vomitoria is the front bed that serves as the entrance to the gardens. That front bed is ringed by soldiered railroad ties donated by Southern Pacific - very tough on chain saws! - and really sets the area off. This multistem, heavily berried specimen is almost 20' tall and the

ball and hurlap job was done by Mr. Jon Anderson, former hort student at SFA - now in the B&B specimen plant business. The Yaupon was found on the old Biggar farm near Shelbyville, Texas. Thanks, Jon, for the effort and this generous donation. A student of mine, Alan Ware, spent several hours pruning the leafy twigs prior to gently setting the massive root ball in the ground. Thanks, Alan! The sign located in the center of that bed announces the SFA HORTICULTURAL GARDENS, the cut out western letters designed with the help of the art department. The sign was built by Mr. Gary Nier, a former graduate student of mine, now a Technician at the Texas Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Overton, Texas. Thanks, Gary!

We have a good number of uncommon plants that might have merit in local landscapes. The native plants of west Texas thought to have landscape value by Lynn Lowrey, Benny Simpson, and other native plants of Texas proponents have found a home in our garden. Lone Star Nursery in San Antonio, Texas generously donated about 30 containerized specimens for our arboretum and they are just pushing now pushing leaves. Thank you, Agnes Hubbard, at Lone Star! Containerized Plants Inc. at Breckenridge, Texas gave us a good price on about 80 containerized plants. My students are also owed a debt of gratitude for the long road trips they have made to retrieve these plants. A good representation of herbaceous perennials have found their spot in Bed B - just inside the fence. Texas bluebonnets, various *Salvia* species, *Zexmenia hispida*, and a Mexico marigold, *Tagetes lemonii* are pushing vigorously after this mild winter. A Texas mountain laurel, *Sophora secundiflora*, looks like it has adapted well. In Bed B there are over 20 species represented, with annuals used as filler this initial year.

We encourage you to attend our Garden Day May 9, 1986. We will distribute maps that locate and describe the annual flowering varieties tested and the permanent woody shrubs and vines that we have planted this spring. In addition, labeled stakes will help guide our visitors through the collection. We are certain that our first visitors will understand that this garden effort is evolving and its final shape depends to a great extent on the commitment of local support - private and commercial. The project has cost \$2000 to date. Materials purchased include 200 yards of top soil for raised beds, landscape timbers, steel edging, treated lumber for the raised beds in Phase II, brick for the bricked area under the wisteria arbor, some plant specimens, seed for the annual flowering varieties, and other odds and ends that we have found it necessary to purchase to reach this stage of development. All of the labor to date has come from students with a substantial portion of it from volunteer "work" parties in the afternoons. One work study student has been assigned some duties in the construction stages. We have also purchased the materials for a raised deck and benches to be added in the next few months. The monies for this project to date has come from horticulture club sales, from a \$2000 funded Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo proposal, and from several donors who have an interest in seeing this project grow in size and visibility.

GOALS

What are the objectives of the arboreteum? The "Friends" of the Arboreteum will have a lot to say about just what direction the arboreteum takes. Let's look at some of the functions that the garden can take on.

1. Provide a display garden of the common and uncommon landscape plants used in east Texas today. This would allow homeowners to compare tree, shrub, and vine varieties side by side before deciding on their final selection. We will have displayed over 20 crepe myrtles before the year is out! Red, lavender, purples, and white's, and a pink and white peppermint variety, small to large. These comparisons are valuable to homeowners, nurserymen, and local builders. An arboreteum implies diversity and woody species and some sacrifices in "design" concepts. That is, it is often necessary for design to utilize repetition to achieve grace. An arboreteum is constantly fighting the "helter-skelter" disease! My conversations with other university colleagues in other states has led me to believe that one should just proceed, quit worrying, and plant with the best design concepts that can be integrated into the project.

2. The arboreteum can provide valuable adaptation data on plants that "might" have a place in east Texas landscapes. The Texas mountain laurel is a beautiful small tree - will it grow here? We shall find out. Botanical gardens are natural adaptation experiments. Nurseryman can see up close new varieties that might have a place in their production plans. More demanding consumers, consumers that ask for particular varieties -- these are the kind of consumers that can affect change to what retail nurseries offer.

3. The teaching function of an arboreteum is obvious. It can be a tool utilized in a number of departments. Forestry and Biology will benefit from a diverse collection of plant materials - plant materials that students should be exposed to. An arboreteum facilitates propagation research by providing enough cuttings to undertake an experiment of decent size. The association of an arboreteum with the Horticulture program is, of course, a natural. The existing excellent greenhouse facilities, a 40' X 40' shadehouse, headhouse, and motivated students that would be "right next door" to the gardens is further testimony to the worth of this project. An arboreteum that involves the "curator" concept can teach students how to take care of plants and how to landscape.

4. Nacogdoches sorely needs a serious look at its development. An arboreteum here should imply history . . . and taste and southern culture. I suspect that a 4 to 8 acre university arboreteum with 4000 taxa in mulched bed displays would be an excellent calling card for our city. We have a

collection of 25 antique rose varieties donated by the Antique Rose Emporium, Brenham, Texas that we hope to have in place by May, 1986 that should be a nice touch to the sesquicentennial season. Thank you, Tommie Adams! The Antique Rose Emporium specializes in old rose varieties; varieties that graced landscapes throughout the South over 100 years ago. While they often fail to put on the display of some modern hybrid teas - the old varieties with their smaller blooms and tougher disposition add a graceful touch to any landscape. Some would make excellent ground cover candidates due to their prostrate growth habits. We maintain that a well developed arboreteum would be an asset to the university and the community.

FUNCTION OF THE NEWSLETTER

The newsletter will serve as the focal point for information dissemination that relates to the objectives of the arboreteum. I will list the plant acquisitions as they are made and keep the Friends aware of arboreteum happenings. I will review gardening and landscaping books that you might want for your library. I will make comments on the progress of our plants and let readers know what's in bloom, what's not, what's having a tough time and what's behaving like a weed! Local gardening talks and events will be publicized in the newsletter. The newsletter will advertize garden events such as "Plant Exchange" days - these have been very successful at other university arboreteums. We can also inform members when excess rooted cuttings need a home! The newsletter will come out two to three times per year or about as often as this busy horticulturist can get one out. The cost of the newsletter will be \$15 per year and the monies generated will go to the SFA arboreteum fund to assist us in plant acquisitions and garden development.

WARM WINTER HEADACHES

If you are wondering what this mild winter is up to - you are not alone. We have received around 700 hours less than 45 degrees Fahrenheit this winter - and many of our deciduous fruit and ornamental trees would rather have 1000 or more. Take a look at your high chilling apples and peaches. They have failed to bloom normally for many local orchardists. The freeze of March 1st caught many of our plants by surprise. While my gauge fell to 24 degrees - others have reported damage at higher temperatures. Early blooming woodies and low chilling fruit trees had many a bloom killed. Our neighbors to the west received no damage that night - the Fredericksburg area didn't even dip below 32! East Texas and Louisiana appeared to receive the strength of the cold blast from the North. Our plants were very susceptible - they lacked good hardiness - because of the exceedingly warm temperatures that preceded the freeze. The second freeze of March 21st also brought frosty pockets to east Texas that further reduced the fruit crop and damaged opening blooms.

past. Better luck next year! Perhaps some of the garden club members can improve ~~our~~ green thumb with this spring bulb?

No, I don't know just what the insect picture is going to be! Some experts think that insects should be worse because more pests survive the mild overwintering period while other experts think that the predators of pests survive better thus making for less troublesome insects! Good year to study that! I have noticed that tent caterpillars appear to be a little more evident, aphids are out early but in their usual numbers this spring. Time will tell.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

There are several books that I find myself picking up more than others when I'm trying to chase down plant information on our new collection. Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia by Donald Wyman, Macmillan Publishing Co., New York is a heavy 1200 pages long but it rarely lacks a plant description. It also defines many a horticultural practice and should be on the shelf of every serious gardener.

"Sunset New Western Garden Book" is a 512 page, \$14.95 must for the serious gardener. It covers 5000 different plants, has 1200 clear line drawings and is one of my most used books. While there are a lot of tropical and semitropical landscape plants covered that would not find a home in east Texas, so many adapted types are described that the book is a gold mine. A lot of information for the dollar!

The Mailorder Association of Nurserymen has just published a new book called "The Complete Guide to Gardening by Mail". This publication can help you find just about any plant you have in mind. There are 94 mailorder nurseries listed, along with 550 gardening plants, seeds and accessories available by mail, cross-indexed for a total of 5000 listings. If you are looking for sources of uncommon landscape plants, this Guide will put the plants right on your doorstep. For your free copy, send a self addressed, business size (#10) envelope with 40 cents postage to the Mailorder Association of Nurserymen, 210 Cartwright Boulevard, Dept. S, Massapequa Park, NY 11762.

"Landscaping with Native Texas Plants" by Sally Wasowski and Julie Ryan, Texas Monthly Press is a \$23.95, 233 page delightfully presented tour through over 125 native plants of Texas. Beautiful color photographs and an insightful description grace each species. The book also has a good history of the "native plants" movement. Contributions by Lynn Lowrey and Benny Simpson.

I am working on a Nursery list that specializes in rare and uncommon plants. I should have it to the Friends in the the next few months.

PLANT ACQUISITIONS to March 1986

Quercus polymorpha	Quercus canbyi
Quercus grisea	Salvia regia
Anisacanthus insignis	Bauhinia congesta
Salvia farinacea	Acer rubrum

Zexmenia hispida
Saphora secundiflora
Chasmanthium latifolia
Viburnum suspensum
Vib. dentatum
Myrsoporum sousunum
Taxodium mucronatum
Prosopis glandulosa
Aronia arbutifolia
Cercis canadensis mexicana
Ilex cornuta "Burfordi"
 Other *Ilex*es not yet planted
Leucophyllum frutescens
Lagerstroemia indica
 "Regal Red"

"Red"
 "White"
 "Pink"
 "Catawba"
 "Conestoga"
 "Powhatan"
 "Basham's Party Pink"
 "Victor"
 "Muskogee"

Juniperus spp. - we are still sorting out our
 juniper collection - about 25 types from the very
 small prostrate types to the erect and columnar
 varieties.

Pittosporum tobira
Hibiscus syriacus
Pyracanthus koidzumii
Azalea
Nerium oleander
 Asiatic jasmine
Spiraea
Achillea millefolium
Aquilegia hinckleyana
Callicarpa americana
Cupressus arizonica
Diospyros texana
Gaillardia
Hibiscus cardiophyllus
Hibiscus "Texas Star"
Ligustrum texanum
Ligustrum sinensis variegata
Metasequoia glyptostroboides
Nandina domestica (several)
Penstemon baccharifolius
Pittosporum tobira Wheeleri
Pinus crassifolia

Lupinus texensis
Tagetes lemonii
 Coral honeysuckle
Vib. nudum
Vitis rotundifolia
Pistache texanum
Oenothera speciosa
Taxodium nutans
Itea virginiana
Ilex vomitoria
Ilex crenata

Podocarpus macrophylla
Raphiolepis indica
Forsythia Beatrix Farrand
Hydrangea Nikko Blue
 Improved Irish Juniper
 Kiyono Juniper
L. indica varieties:
 "William Toovey"
 "Hardy Lavender"
 "Lavender"
 "Carolina Beauty"
 "Potomac"
 "Seminole"
 "Tuscarora"
 "Near East"

Pitt. tobira variegata
Pinus thunbergii
Photinia fraseri
Camellia spp.
 Liriodendron and Mondo grass
Forsythia spp.
Abelia grandiflora
Aesulus pavia
Ascyrum hypericoides
Cortaderia selloana
Cupressus sempervirens
Eleagnus macrophylla
Gordonia lasianthus
Ilex vomitoria nana
Iris spp (La. iris)
Gardenia radicans
Lonicera sempervirens
Myrica cerifera
Pavonia lasiopetala
Philadelphus sp.
Polygonum longiflorum
Yucca pendula

Eriobotrya japonica
Spirea bumalda crispa
Spirea reevesiana

Cornus florida
Spirea prunifolia
Spirea reev. floraplenaap

Spirea arguta
Spirea thunbergi
Viburnum allegheny
Vib. mohawk
Vib. opulus sterile
Vib. tom. plicatum

Spirea snowmound
Spirea van houttei
Vib. burkwoodi
Vib. chesapeake
Vib. plicatum 'Mariesii'
Cleyera japonica

We have other plants in the shade house that are not on this list. Some plants we have secured from nursery operations that specialize in liners - rooted cuttings in a small 2" X 2", 3" deep plastic pot. We purchased flats of 48 liners/flat from several of the liner nurseries that dot the Forest Hill, Louisiana area. Mark Byers at Byers Nursery, Huntsville, Alabama helped us fill out our Spirea, Viburnum, and Crepe Myrtle collection. We will grow them in the shade house this year - plant several of them in the arboretum this coming winter and then sell the remainder as a Hort Club project.

In addition, we are testing this year a wide range of annual flowering plants. About a dozen varieties of marigold are to be utilized from the super tiny french dwarfs to the larger varieties like Jubilee. We have plenty of Petunia varieties in the test including some new grandifloras from Sakata seed company. In addition, we have Nasturtium, Sensation Cosmos, Dianthus, Coleus, Celosia, Four o'clocks, Zinnias, Portulaca, various morning glories, shasta daisy, glorious daisy, poppy, verbena, thunbergia, phlox and others. My Landscape Plant Materials class has been divided into 6 "groups", each group is responsible for the annual flowers selected, their placement in the bed and their labeling to insure proper identification. All of the beds have been mulched heavily with a wood chip/manure mulch that was given to us by the Exposition Center. Thank you, Tony Weir! Bob Rogers, Grounds, saw to it that the mulch was delivered to the right spot and also helped out with some SFA compost dump truck loads. Visitors to the garden will occasionally find annual groupings that are labeled, for example, "Petunia Unknown". All this means is that a student failed to write the variety name, that the label was lost, or the flat had two labels different or some other disaster! We will have 5,000 plants set with most identified. Wildwood Nursery, east of Nacogdoches on Highway 7 was nice enough to donate a few flats of their bedding plant production for our garden trials. Thanks, Tom! Should be a late spring treat if mother nature grants us good growing weather. As phases I and II are planted a final cataloguing will be developed and distributed to the members in early May..

GARDEN FIELD DAY, May 9, 1986

On Friday May 9, 1986 - 1 PM to 6PM - the public is invited to view the SFA horticultural garden effort. A brief introduction a little after 1 PM will be delivered to acquaint the "Friends" of the SFA Arboretum with the accomplishments to date.